Cuban Blindness

Description:
On May 4, 1993, Cuba asked the international health community and the World Health Organization (WHO) to find the cause of a mysterious epidemic of blindness that was spreading uncontrollably. Contradictory hypotheses confronted the team of scientists on this mission. Is the epidemic the result of a plot to topple Castro, as the Cubans believe? Or exposure to radioactivity or an unidentified nerve toxin accidentally released by the Russian Army withdrawing from Cuba? Cuban Blindness: Diary of a Mysterious Epidemic Neuropathy is a firsthand account of the epidemic of blindness and the hardships of life in Cuba at the time of the "special period" that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the tightening of the US embargo. Dr. Román—who was at the time Chief of Neuroepidemiology at the US National Institutes of Health—was a participant in this scientific mission and describes the neurological symptoms experienced by the victims of this epidemic disease, and narrates the epidemiologists’ detective work struggling to solve the mystery. This book combines neuroscience and scientific discovery with political intrigue, finally bringing the reader to the unexpected solution provided by a WWII survivor of Changi POW Camp in Singapore. Cuban Blindness: Diary of a Mysterious Epidemic Neuropathy is a description of the neuroepidemiological study undertaken to identify the cause of the epidemic neurological disease that affected Cuba in 1993-1994.

- Summarizes clinical manifestations in prototypical case reports
- Analyzes possible neurological and neuroepidemiological causes from possible viruses to toxins
- Discusses the health ramifications of political decisions surrounding the Cuban Embargo
- Describes the implementation of treatment and preventive measures

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